

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

The "broadcast flag" is a way of marking digital-television content so that consumer electronics and computers will recognize the marks and limit the making of copies. - How can this NOT interfere? If a gusy wants to make 5 copies for my 3 kids at college, my car TV and my home but the flag limits his copies to 2 - that definitely interferes. The only way it wouldn't interfere is if the number of copies were set reasonably high so that those with special circumstances wouldn't be at fault (e.g., 30 copies). That would be enough to give pretty much everyone enough leeway for personal use (what if someone has a large family and wants to send them a TV report where he was interviewed?), but not so much that there can be misuse.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

Well, if the flag doesn't limit the sending of DTV content, o.k. but why is this question in here? It would seem to me that the very transferring of such content would perhaps entail "copying" it from one place to the next. Therefore, the only danger in the transfer of such content is that the flag would recognize this as a "copy" and limit the number of transfers. That would be a huge mistake. What if the flag registers a "copy" but the file actually didn't go through? Even if that weren't the case, the flag would still REALLY have to jack up it's number of allowed transfers since copies can get deleted, corrupted, etc.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

How could the answer to that be no? I'd really like a response on that one. There's already a huge incompatibility with DVD players in different regions. All designed to make more money, but the real problem is that equipment not designed to look for something (or vice versa) will experience a problem when that something is there (or isn't in the reverse case).

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Obviously no one knows the future. But whenever you put a control on something, that limits development.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

We'd have to buy all new machines. It would be a momentary "good" for the economy of course and it's not like we haven't done it before (record players, 8 tracks, cassette decks, CDs, DVDs) just to name a few.

Other Comments:

I understand what you're trying to do - be fair. And I applaud your efforts to do so, but at the same time I'm worried about the ordinary folks who may end up being penalized for nothing and the future climate of civil liberties. We have already conceded huge numbers of such liberties and I'd hate to see a future where we'll have even fewer.